

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L HAMBURG 0265

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SUBJECT: MINISTER-PRESIDENT ERNST ALBRECHT: HIS VIEWS ON
THE POLISH AGREEMENTS AND A CDU/FDP COALITION GOVERNMENT IN
LOWER SAXONY

REF: HAMBURG 244

1. WILFRIED HASSELMANN, THE MINISTER FOR BUNDESRAT AFFAIRS
IN LOWER SAXONY, INFORMED ME YESTERDAY DURING MY VISIT OO
HANNOVER TO ATTEND THE DEBATE IN THE GANDTAG ON THE
ALBRECHT GOVERNMENT PROGRAM THAT:

A. LOWER SAXONY WOULD VOTE FOR THE RATIFICATION OF THE
POLISH AGREEMENTS IN THE BUNDESRAT AND;

B. THE ALBRECHT GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN ENGAGED IN CON-
FIDENTIAL DISCUSSIONS WITH VARIOUS MEMBERS OF THE FDP
FACTCON IN THE LANDTAG WHICH, HASSELMANN PREDICTED, WOULD
LEAD TO THE FORMATION OF A CDU-FDP COALITION GOVERNMENT
IN LATE APRIL OR EARLY MAY.

2. THESE DISCLOSURES, TOGETHER WITH THE VIEWS EXPRESSED
TO ME IN A PRIVATE DISCUSSION WITH MINISTER PRESIDENT
ERNST ALBRECHT ARE EXTREMELY SENSITIVE BECAUSE, AS
HASSELMANN TOLD ME, AT THIS JUNCTURE NONE BUT THE LEADER-
SHIP OF THE CDU FACTION IN THE LANDTAG IS PRIVY TO THE
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ALBRECHT DECISION TO VOTE FOR THE RATIFICATION OF THE

POLISH TREATIES. THE FOLLOWING IS AN ELABORATION ON HASSELMANN'S VIEWS ON BOTH SUBJECTS:

A. POLISH AGREEMENTS. THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT IS CURRENTLY ENGAGED IN SECRET DISCUSSION WITH THE POLISH GOVERNMENT WHICH, IT IS EXPECTED, WILL LEAD TO AN ADDENDUM TO THE PROTOCOL SIGNED IN OCTOBER 1975 BETWEEN THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC AND POLAND BINDING THE POLISH GOVERNMENT TO ALLOW A FREE EMIGRATION OF ALL ETHNIC GERMANS IN POLAND. HASSELMANN WAS OPTIMISTIC THAT THE POLES, ANXIOUS TO STILL THE PUBLIC DENUNCIATIONS OF THE TREATIES BY VARIOUS CDU LEADERS AND TO DEFLECT THE UNFAVORABLE EDITORIAL COMMENTS IN CDU-LEJNING NEWSPAPERS TO THE EFFECT THAT THE POLISH AGREEMENTS HAVE BEEN DISADVANTAGEOUS TO THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC, WOULD OFFER SOME ADDITIONAL CONCESSIONS TO THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC IN THE FORM OF GUARANTEES THAT ALL ETHNIC GERMANS WHO WISH TO EMIGRATE TO GERMANY WOULD BE ALLOWED TO DO SO. SUCH A GESTURE ON THE PART OF THE POLES WOULD, SAID HASSELMANN, ALLOW THE LOWER SAXONY FACTION IN THE BUNDESRAAT A FREE CONSCIENCE TO VOTE ON HUMANITARIAN GROUNDS FOR THE RATIFICATION OF THE AGREEMENTS ON MARCH 12.

WHEN C ASKED HASSELMANN WHAT THE POSITION OF LOWER SAXONY WOULD BE IF POLAND FAILED TO OFFER THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC UNEQUIVOCAL GUARANTEES THAT ETHNIC GERMANS WHO WISHED TO EMIGRATE WOULD BE ALLOWED TO DO SO, HASSELMANN REFLECTED FOR A LONG TIME AND THEN QUIETLY ANSWERED THAT LOWER SAXONY WOULD VOTE FOR THE RATIFICATION OF THE AGREEMENTS WITH OR WITHOUT FURTHER CONCESSIONS ON THE PART OF THE POLES. HASSELMANN REITERATED THAT UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES SHOULD THIS VIEW BE DISCLOSED WITH ANYONE BUT THE AMBASSADOR. (PLEASE PROTECT THIS SOURCE.)

B. POSSIBLE CDU/FDP COALITION GOVERNMENT. DESPITE THE UNANIMOUS DECISION OF THE FDP LAND COMMITTEE TO REJECT ANY OVERTURES BY THE CDU TO ENTER INTO A COALITION GOVERNMENT IN HANNOVER, HASSELMANN INFORMED ME THAT DISCUSSIONS ARE, NEVERTHELESS, CURRENTLY UNDERWAY WITH FEW OF THE MORE CONSERVATIVE MEMBERS OF THE FDP FACTION ABOUT AN EVENTUAL FORMATION OF A CDU/FDP COALITION GOVERNMENT. FOLLOWING THE APRIL 24-25 FDP PARTY CONVENTION IN BAUNTSCHWEIG, AT WHICH A NEW STATE PARTY BOARD WILL BE ELECTED, THE FDP, SAID HASSELMANN, WILL FEEL LESS CONSTRAINED TO HONOR ITS POLITICAL CONFIDENTIAL

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ALLIANCE OF THE PAST WITH THE SPD WHICH THE ELECTION OF ALBRECHT AND THE CDU GOVERNMENT THREE WEEKS AGO HAS MADE OBSOLETE. BECAUSE OF THE EXPECTATION - INDEED, CONFIDENCE - THAT THE FDP WILL ENTER INTO A COALITION AGREEMENT WITH THE CDU, ALBRECHT WILL REFRAIN FROM APPOINTING THE REMAINING THREE OR FOUR MORE MEMBERS OF HIS CABINET UNTIL AFTER THE ELECTION OF A NEW FDP STATE BOARD. AT THAT TIME, ASSUMING A READINESS ON THE PART OF THE FDP TO ENTER INTO

THE GOVERNMENT, ALBRECHT WILL OFFER THESE REMAINING CABINET POSITIONS TO THE FDP.

3. PRIOR TO THE OPENING OF THE AFTERNOON SESSION IN THE LANDTAG, ALBRECHT INVITED ME TO HIS OFFICE FOR A PRIVATE CHAT. SPEAKING IN FAULTLESS ENGLISH, HE Began BY REHISCING ABOUT THE YDAR HE SPENT AT CORNELL IN 1949. THIS WAS WHERE HE PERFECTED HIS ENGLISH BUT HE FIRST LEARNED IT, HE SAID, AT HIS GRANDMOTHER'S JNEE. ALBRECHT EXPLAINED THAT HIS FRANDFATHER HAD BEEN SENT OUT FROM BREMEN AS A YOUNG MAN TO LEARN THE COTTON TRADE IN CHARLESTON AND THAT HE HAD THERE MET ANJ MARRIED A GIRL FROM SOUTMNCAROLINA, WHO HE BROUGHT BACK TO GERMANY AS A BRIDE IN 1912. ALBRECHT KNEW, HE SAID, THAT VARIOUS MINISTER-PRESIDENTS WOULD BE VISITING THE UNITED STATES DURING OUR BICENTENNIAL YEAR AND HOPED THAT HE TOO COULD MAKE SUCH A TRIP WHICH MIGHT INCLUDE SENTIMENTAL RETURNS OO CORNELL AND CHARLESTON.

4. ALBRECHT WAS MUCH MORE CIRCUMSPECT THJN HASSELMANN ABOUT THE POLISH TREATIES AND THE POSSIBILITY OF DRAWING THE FDP INTO A COALITION GOVERNMENT. WHEN SPEAKING ABOUT THESE SUBJECTS, HE BACAME SOMEWHAT ORACULAR AND SAID HE UNDERSTOODSI HAD HAD AN INTERESTING AND INFORMATIVE CONVERSATION WITH HASSELMANNSEARLIER IN THE DAY. WITH REGARD TO THE POLISH TREATIES HE STREFSSED THAT "THE HUMANITARINA ASPECTS OF THIS DELEMMA ARE, AND SHOULD BE, MORE IMPORTANT THAN THE FINANCIAL RAMIFACTIONS INVOLVED. ON THE MATTER OF BRCNGING THE FDP INTO HIS GOVERNMENT AS A JUNIOR PARTNER, ALBRECHT STATED THAT "WE HAVE DONE AND ARE DOING EVERYTHING TO MAKE SUCH A RELATIONSHIP EVENTKALLY POSSIBLE. NOT, HOWEVER, UNTILNFTER THE ELCTION OF A NEW FDP STATE BOARD IN LOWER SAXONY WILL ANY FURTHER PROGRESS TOWARD THE FORMTION OF A CDU/FDP COALITION BE POSSIBLE.

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5. THE MOST INTERESTING ASPECT OF THE LANDTAG DEBATE YEASTERDAY WAS THE VIRTUOSO PERFORMANCE OF ALBRECHT. RELAXED, CHARMING, WITTY, AND GUILLESS, HE IS OBVIOUSLY OFF TO A VERY GOOD START WITH THE FDP AND SPD FACTIONS IN THE LANDTAG. ALTHOUGH THESE WERE SOME EXTREMELY SHARP EXCHANGES BETWEEN THE MINISTER-PRESIDENT, WHO WAS DEFENDING HIS PROGRAM, JNDD THE LEFT WING OF THD OPPSITION PARTIES ALBRECHT, WITHOUT SATISFYING HIS QUESTIONERS ON ALL POINTS DID, HOWEVER, CONVEY THE IMAGE OF SUCH GOODWILL AND TOLERANCE FOR HIS OPPOSITION THAT SPIEGEL REPORTER SITTING NEXT TO ME COMMENTED THAT HE HAD NEVER BEFORE SENSED SUCH A PERSONAL RAPPORT BETWEEN A MINISTER-PRESIDENT AND HIS OPPOSITION. CLEARLY, THE HONEYMOON IS STILL IN FULL BLOOM BUT BY THE TIME IT'S OVER ALBRECHT MAY - AND, INDEED, EXPECTS TO - BROADEN THE BASE OF HIS GOVERNMENT BY ENLARGING IT TO INCLUDE

THE 11-MEMBER FDP FACTION IN THE LANDTAG, BROGAN

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